



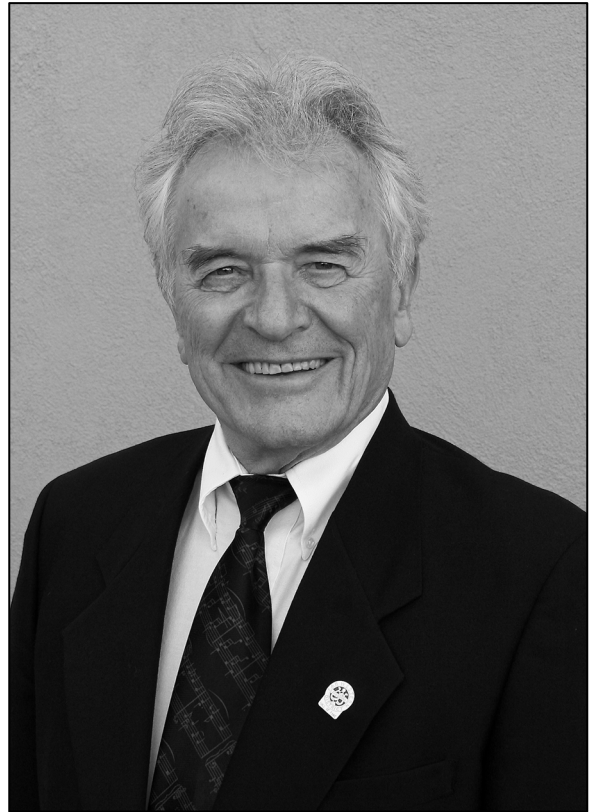
Far Western District

Convention Honoree

Ray Rhymer – 2017 FWD Spring Convention Honoree

Ray Rhymer was born in Cook County, IL and raised in Park Ridge, IL. Early exposure to music was Ray's mother singing along with the radio (Beverly Shea is what he remembers), followed by choir and band in grade school and junior high, and high school choir. In his freshman year he heard a high school quartet sing barbershop, found the local chapter and joined. Ray remembers singing with the chorus in Chicago on radio station WGN. Other high school activities and work displaced barbershop, and then the USMC for 3 years. College (GI bill), work as a "Rocket Scientist", and family occupied the next period of time. In 1963 a friend mentioned the local Simi Valley Barbershop chapter, and Ray went to the next meeting and has continued to this day.

It wasn't long before Ray was singing in a quartet, and then another, and another (you all understand). The most notable quartet was Four Points West (T - Ray, L - John Revheim, Br - Earl Moon, Bs - Willie Kleen) during 1977-79, finishing 3rd in 1978 in the FWD. In 1965 he was asked to direct a small Sweet Adeline chorus. That didn't last very long, but the directing journey was initiated, and still continues with the Sacramento Chapter. He has directed for over 30 of the last 50 years. His most wonderful directing experience was 15 years with the Placerville Chapter. It was during this time their Youth In Harmony program grew significantly, led by Ron Murray and Richard Lund. The chapter was awarded the FWD Chapter of the Year when Keith Eckhardt was President, and the Gold Rush Chorus became the FWD NCalE Small Chorus Champions.



Ever enthusiastic about the barbershop sound, Ray entered the Contest and Judging Program in 1972 as a candidate in the Harmony Accuracy Category. The categories changed from 5 to 4 in 1975 and Ray certified as a Sound Judge in Indianapolis, IN at category school just before the 1975 International Convention. When Categories changed again, he certified in the Singing Category. He judged division and final quartet and chorus contests in 8 of the 16 districts in both the United States and Canada, and several International Contests over a period of 29 years. One natural consequence of being a judge was to coach quartets and choruses and serve in the District Harmony Education programs around the Society.

Ray also served the FWD as Vice President of Music and Performance, Vice President of Youth Activities, and was a member of the BHS COTS Faculty for Music and Performance.

He is currently the *Westunes* Editor, completing 15 years in that capacity in 2016. It's uncertain whether he will continue for another 15 years!

He always closes his weekly music director message with:

"It is OK to Encourage, Enthuse, Excite and Enjoy. Ray"